

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

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July 15, 2004

The Honorable Roger Noriega
Assistant Secretary for Western Hemispheric Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Room 6262
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: International Boundary and Water Commission

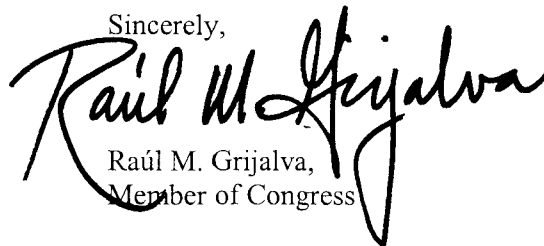
Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you may be aware, a serious sewage spill occurred in the Ambos Nogales region in recent weeks. Apparently, the cause of the discharge of millions of gallons of raw sewage from Nogales, Sonora into the Nogales Wash and into the United States, specifically into Nogales, Arizona, was caused by a ruptured sewer line in Nogales, Sonora. I understand from the local authorities in Arizona that the efforts of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) in addressing this matter have not been sufficient.

The sewage spill is of grave concern given the obvious detrimental effects resulting from raw sewage flowing in an open channel through the developed areas of Nogales, Arizona. In addition to the obnoxious odors emitted from the spill, the potential for serious health effects from this discharge are a major concern. The residents of Nogales are exposed to the possibility of hepatitis and other serious diseases that can result from contact with the wastewater flows. Unknown discharges of industrial and commercial wastes into the sewage stream undoubtedly will have a negative environmental effect on the ecosystem along the Nogales Wash and the Santa Cruz River.

As the agency responsible for the wastewater treatment facility in Nogales, Arizona that treats both U.S. and Mexican sewage, the IBWC has the ability to insist upon a response from Mexican authorities at the federal level to address this condition. I urge you to insist that the Commission immediately take all actions necessary at the highest diplomatic levels to assure that a) the spill is contained and prevented from reoccurring and b) the detrimental effects to the residents of Nogales, Arizona are documented and immediately addressed.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva,
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Manuel Ruiz (Supervisor, Santa Cruz County)
The Honorable Albert Kramer (Mayor, City of Nogales)
The Honorable Janet Napolitano (Governor, State of Arizona)